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Sikh Foundation of Virginia

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Sikh Foundation of Virginia

by Khizar Khalil

For this paper I went to a Gurdwara which is a temple for the Sikh religion. I went to one that is located near my house in Lorton, Virginia. This is the house of worship for the Sikhs. This temple is open to any person of any religion or any color. The person I met for this temple was Parvinder Singh who was a close friend of my dad's and he volunteers at this temple very frequently. People around the temple were very busy because they had some things to take care of around the temple. This temple is located at 7250 Ox Road Fairfax Station, Virginia 22079. His number is [redacted] and the date I went to this temple was October 23rd, 2015. Mr. Singh was very friendly and was very eager to show me around the temple.

The temple from the outside was an elegant beautiful sight. The outside of the temple was all white and the top was wrapped in gold in a dome like feature. It kind of looks like a church from the outside from other sides of the temple. There is also a flag that represents their religion and its yellow which is also very beautiful. The inside of the temple was beautiful it was very open and a lot of room to perform the prayers. I was greeted very so kindly by everyone in the temple. They also were very helpful explaining the way things go about the temple.

My friend Parvinder told me the meaning of "Sikh" which means "disciple". They say that they are the disciples of god and that they

follow the writings and also the teachings of the Ten Sikh Gurus. In the temple you are expected to take off your shoes before entering the temple. This reminds me of the Muslims and how in a Masjid you aren't allowed to wear your shoes either. It really shows the respect levels they have for the temple. How much the temple means to their religion and to the people. You also have to wash your feet and hands somewhat like the Muslims in a masjid before they pray. When they pray they also bow down and touch the face to the floor to show respect to the god. They expect people of the community to put cash in to keep the temple running. The temple is usually open 24 hours a day but this one isn't. In the temple they serve food but it is all vegetarian due to it being against the Sikh religion to eat meat.

I was comfortable talking and meeting with the people in the temple. It reminded me about the mosque I went to because everyone is very friendly and they enjoy having people in the temple. The emotions of the people talking to everyone was amazing and they explained everything so perfectly. There was no real service that went on but they were just talking to the few people that were there. In the temple people come to name their children, to get married and also to have a baptism. A baptism is called the Amrit Ceremony. The naming ceremony is held at the temple so that the baby can be considered pure and so that it can be a community effort to help and give the parents and child the right guidance.

This experience was definitely different and I enjoyed going to see and hear about the Sikh religion and what goes on in the temple. I had an amazing time with Parvinder and the rest of the people that helped along the way. It was truly a humbling experience and made me really think about other religions and how different they can be. •

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